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## Inside

Around the diocese	9
Calendar	10-11
Columns	14-15
Entertainment	20
Feature	8
Opinion	19
Sports	13
World & Nation	4-7



## Taizé: Ah that little springtime

By Lee Strong  
Staff writer

ROCHESTER — In August of 1940, Roger Shultz, a 25-year-old Swiss theology student, rode his bicycle across his country's border into France.

He wanted to find some way to help refugees — especially Jews — who were fleeing Nazi-occupied northern France.

And inspired by Catholic monastic tradition, Shultz — the son of a Protestant minister — also dreamed of creating a center for prayer, study and community living.

As Shultz searched for a base for his activities, he learned of a large house that was for sale in the nearly deserted village of Taizé. Arriving in that village, Shultz asked an old peasant woman where he could get something to eat. The woman invited him to join her.

While they ate — as Shultz since has recounted numerous times — he described his ideas to the woman. The woman pleaded with him to buy the house and remain in Taizé.

Shultz decided to heed her request.

"I chose Taizé because the woman was poor," Shultz later told Rex Brico, author of *Taizé: Brother Roger and his Community*. "Christ speaks through the poor and it's good to listen to them. Anyone who begins with the poorest of the poor is not likely to go wrong. Contact with them prevents faith from becoming vague and unreal."

That philosophy led Shultz — now known as Brother Roger of Taizé — not only to remain in the French village, but also to form the ecumenical community that bears its name: the Community of Taizé, or as it is more commonly known, Taizé.

In the 32 years since the first seven brothers of Taizé made their solemn vows, the community has gained a worldwide reputation for its work in ecumenism, ministry to youth, prayer, music, and efforts to help

Continued on  
page 17